



The Promethean

The literary journal of Concordia University-Portland, Oregon

Spring/Summer 2005

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The Promethean is published semiannually by the College of Theology, Arts, and Sciences (CTAS) of Concordia University with support from the Associated Students of Concordia University (ASCU). The content of *The Promethean* is chosen by an editorial staff of faculty and student volunteers and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the College of Theology, Arts, and Sciences of Concordia University. All works are copyrighted. Submissions may be edited for brevity or grammar unless otherwise arranged. Submissions from the Concordia University community are welcome. Please send material to promethean@cu-portland.edu.

The Promethean Staff:

Faculty Advisor: Lynnell Edwards

Student Editors: Sara Bonacum, Aaron Snyder

Pre-Press: Sarah Grace Shewbert

The Promethean is printed on recycled paper with soy inks.

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INTERNAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY SARA BONACUM AND AARON SNYDER
COVER ART BY AARON SNYDER

 LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Sara Bonacum - Student Editor

For this Spring 2005 issue of *The Promethean*, I have had the honor of being Student Editor. It has been both challenging and fun reviewing the literary work of my peers and having the privilege of working with them to create this unique issue. Through the course of this semester, while working on *The Promethean* staff, I have recognized the meaning of integrity in literature.

Concordia University is a Lutheran school that works hard to uphold and demonstrate Christian values. While some of the material printed in this issue may not directly reflect the views or mission statement of the University, we at *The Promethean* have made a distinct effort to recognize Concordia's diverse community, resurrected in the work printed in the following pages.

I would like to thank the College of Theology, Arts and Sciences for supporting this publication so faithfully, and Student Government for its generous funding and interest in keeping this work circulating and alive. I would also like to thank Aaron Snyder, Student Editor, who did an exemplary job of screening and editing the writing that was submitted, and worked very hard to release this unique edition of *The Promethean*. I would also like to thank all of the students and faculty that contributed their writing and art, and giving all of us the opportunity to learn from their perspectives. It has been our goal through this issue to offer our readers new angles on the human condition through the expression of the vast spectrum of the widely different personalities that constitute the glue that holds together the Concordia community.

BIG SKY STATE @ 9:45 PM

Lukas Sherman

Only now, on a couch in rural Montana,
A half-full glass of scotch and a scratchy record,
Your cousins and their new son having just turned in,
Does it begin to clear up.

With the night lazy on the back porch
And the stars drinking at the local bar,
It begins to settle.

Into the couch cushions, lost next to the
Loose change and crumbs; down the snow
Covered driveway, past the train tracks,
And out into the clear winter air.

The clean floorboards wink at their guest,
The gun metal radiator grins.
"Clap your hands all you light sockets!"

This is a new place and a fresh time.

Free from yesterday, last week, free from funerals,
Moving, and out of touch friends.

These lesser things were left at the border.
Unclench fists and unbar teeth.

Let a calmed country evening come in and graciously host you.
Join the mountains in a game of hearts.
Stay on the couch and watch them through the picture window.

The barbwire days are locked away.
Not victory exactly, but truce.

HERE COME THE DRUNKEN JANUARIES

Lukas Sherman

It's in the tension of the strange English band
Who are on the stereo.
It's in the movie on TV, playing with the sound off,
That brings back college in January.

Or, maybe, it's the mixture of coffee and alcohol,
The mixture of journal writing and lonely apartments.
The neglected plants and fresh ex-girlfriends.
The random lines that come to me about dogs with darts
Putting out the moon's eyes.

Whatever it is, I am branched out into 4 different years,
Shuffling together like cards.
I try to re-gather and tether myself to the present,
The painted fingernail and French press in front of me.

Yet who wants this shabby present?
If it wants me, it will have to do better.

For right now, past tense friends and a younger,
If less interesting, face hold sway.

SO YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL

Michael R. Ashley

He has been nursing his drink for some time now and he is wondering if she means to stand him up. The thing of it is he knows she can't be faulted for being so young and beautiful. Beautiful people have always made their own rules.

He signals the barman for another. As he pays, her photograph falls out of his wallet. They had been at the beach that day. In the picture, she has just shaken out her wild Raggedy Ann hair. She is looking boldly into the camera, her ever-changing green eyes flashing. She is, he thinks, a blind fury of creation. He considers himself in the mirror behind the bar.

And she is ten years your junior. Until now, you have been careful about not making a bloody fool of yourself. Maybe it is time to let her go. Do it now before there is any of the arguing and the crying. She is already feeling an obligation. He stares blankly at the bald face on the clock above the door. Who knows? If you have any luck at all, she has already gone off with that boy. Just as well. It will make things easier this way. The boy is more her age anyway. Haven't you become quite the philosopher?

A young couple comes in for a nightcap, gay and glowing from dancing. They take a booth in the back, holding hands and cuddling, whispering and laughing. The barman goes over and takes their order. He brings it to them on a tray and leaves them alone.

He will have one more. He tells himself he knows how hard it is to get a cab at this hour.

A noisy crowd of regulars burst through the door, joining him along the bar, leaving him to his anonymity. They are the late shift from the hospital at the corner, some in whites, and others in scrubs, wound up tight from ten hours on their feet in the emergency room. A tall EMT begins recounting the evening for the barman, with everyone chiming in details as he goes along.

"I'm telling you, James, she was dead when we got there."

"Oh, here we go again," scoffs the barman. "C'mon, you always say that."

"No really," insists the EMT. He thumps his partner. "Ask Trent here."

"Well, she didn't have a pulse," the one called Trent begins.

"She didn't have any vital signs!" crows the EMT.

"Lemme guess," the barman deadpans. "You brought her back from the brink of death."

The EMT pauses for effect, then seems to think better of it and shakes his head. "We don't know yet. She's in Intensive."

"I'll say this for her," a male nurse in scrubs allows, "that's one hell of a pair of legs."

About this, there is unanimous agreement, the men among them nodding distractedly and staring into their drinks as if they might see her there.

"How about that poor boy she was riding with?" someone asks.

"Brains across the highway -that's what you get for not wearing a helmet," says another.

An RN with sad brown eyes and a delicate, heart-shaped face produces a cigarette and leans in as someone lights it for her. "Hang on, you guys," she says. "He gave her his helmet to wear. He saved her life," she says plaintively exhaling. "But my god, what a head of red hair. That's the reddest hair I've ever seen in my life," she finishes.

"She was a genuine redhead all right," smirks the male nurse.

"That'll do, sir," deems the barman. "This one's on the house kids."

"Thank you James," says the RN. "You, at least, are still a gentleman."

This brings a loud chorus of protests and much laughter all around.

He is sitting at his end of the bar, holding her photograph in fingers that begin trembling as he hears them describing the girl. Panicky realization hits him in the pit of his stomach, sucking the wind from him. He is going to be sick. His chest is tightening, he's not breathing, the collar at his throat is strangling him. He is gasping, frantic. He whirls, knocking his drink off the bar; it falls in slow motion, shattering at his feet. A few of the other patrons look up, mildly curious. He rounds on the crowd. One of them must know. One of them has to know the name of the girl--

A flash of red at the door. Can it be? Feeling his heart lurching in his chest, he reaches for the bar. She's here, swinging through the door, smiling and oblivious, her eyes now dancing around the room, now falling upon him. She waves, laughing as if she doesn't have a care in the wicked world. He feels his brow is damp, his pulse pounding in his temples. He is only dimly aware that everyone in the place is turning to look at her as she cuts and winds her way around the tables towards him.

My god, he thinks, she is so young and beautiful. He catches his ragged breath and pulls himself together. He rises on unsteady legs and puts away his trembling hands. Then as she draws near to him, he smiles for her.

CON LOS OJOS CERRADOS

Luis Garcia

Con los ojos cerrados
La oscuridad ilumina
Y la verdad es clara

Con los ojos cerrados
El Blanco y Negro se mezclan
Creando una inseparable unidad

Con los ojos cerrados
El mundo es real
Las diferencias son ficticias

Con los Ojos cerrados
La confianza nace
Y el temor muere

Con los ojos cerrados
Las barreras se derrumban
Y las almas se liberan

La humanidad mira claro
Mientras reina la oscuridad
Con los ojos cerrados

WITH OUR EYES SHUT

Luis Garcia

With our eyes shut
The darkness illuminates.
And the truth is clear

With our eyes shut
White and Black mix
An inseparable unity is created

With our eyes shut
The world is real
Differences are fictitious

With our eyes shut
Trust is born
Fear is vanished

With our eyes shut
Barriers collapse
Souls are liberated

Humanity can see clearly
While darkness reigns
With our eyes shut

AMERICANO

Luis Garcia

I am,
The son of wetbacks.
Drenched in back-breaking sweat
From jobs they stole.

I am,
The son of invaders.
Foreigners in a land that short ago
Was home.

I am,
The son of infamous ones.
Eyed warningly by many
From head to toe.

I am,
One of many
Who felt pain and horror.
Paralyzed, trembling with patriotic tears,
As the towers fall.

I am,
Brother, witness of endless tears
Shed by parents for the soldier, son
Who had to go and never returned.

I am,
Like all before me.
Regardless of color
I too, believed in the Dream.

I am,
What my parents could not be;
Educated, a voter, a dreamer
A voice.

I am,
An American.

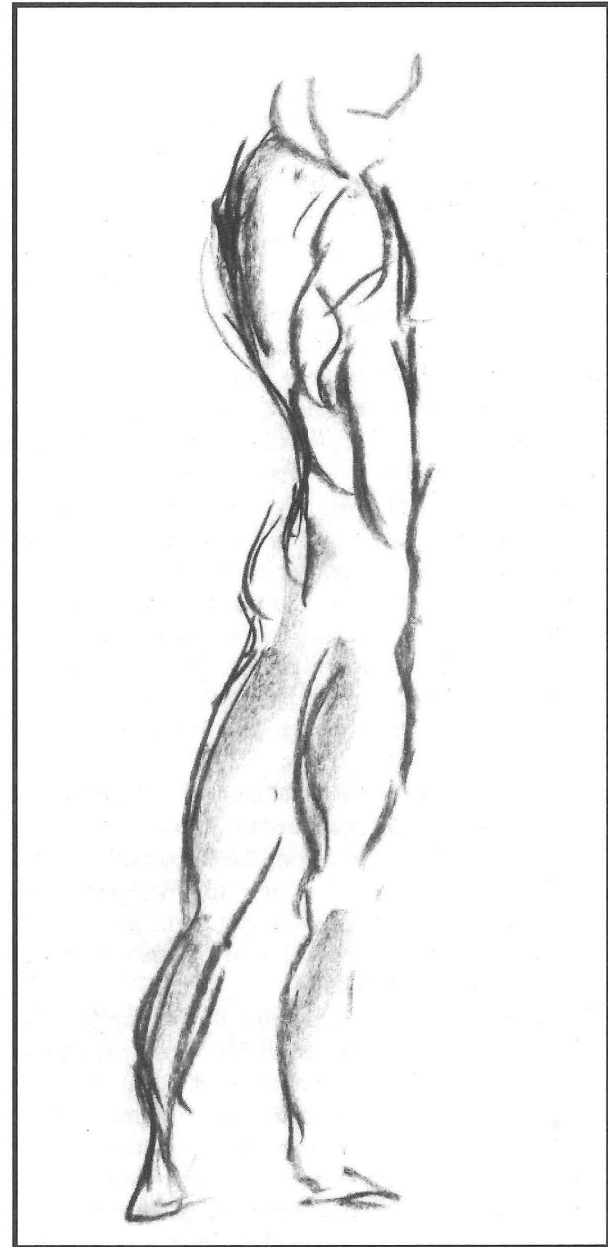


FIGURE STUDY

Aaron Snyder

YANKARI

Paul Rondema

Okwi celebrated his ninth birthday at Yankari Game Reserve in north eastern Nigeria. At his request, his parents packed food, clothes and his younger brother, Yomi, into their 1977 Mercedes and drove three hours, trying without success to avoid the potholes that mark Nigeria's untamed roads. Upon arriving, they discovered the park in a state of disrepair common to many West-African attractions. It was not without excitement, however, that Okwi and Yomi witnessed the first water buffalo, the first bushbuck and the first baboon of their adventure.

Baboons are memorable creatures. They have been known to remove towels, clothes and wallets while people swim and raid unlocked cabins in search of a culinary or alcohol-related reward. But it is their almost constant chatter that is most impressive to many of Yankari's visitors. Their voices, like the click of an old ceiling fan, the drip of a faulty faucet or hum of a fluorescent light, gradually fade into the background over time, but for those who are only visiting the constancy can at times be maddening. So it is true that whether stealing food, "talking" late into the night or generally terrorizing the guests, baboons are the most common, the most memorable and often the most unloved wildlife Yankari has to offer. This fact did not stop the smiles from appearing upon Okwi and Yomi's faces when the first baboon was spotted in the distance.

The boys helped their parents unpack the contents of the Mercedes into their rondel. Visitors to Yankari are not permitted to sleep in tents. The stated purpose behind this rule is to protect guests from the hazards the baboon population brings. The unspoken purpose lies in a story that is repeated by children, one generation to the next. This story is never told in the presence of adults and is always accompanied by a warning. Having visited three years earlier, Okwi knew the story. Yomi had never heard the tale.

While they unpacked, the boys debated the sleeping arrangements. As the oldest, and the one whose birthday was being celebrated, Okwi was confident in his eventual victory but allowed his brother to retain the hope of winning. Having finished unpacking, choosing beds and changing into their swimming suits the boys joined their father for a swim at Wikki warm springs. With the jungle reaching down to the water's edge on one side and white sand underfoot, the warm springs provide adults a chance to relax and children a chance to play. The twenty minute walk to the springs only adds to the refreshment provided by the swim. After rinsing off the grime of travel and playing childhood water games the three of them prepared to return to their rondel for dinner. It was on this walk, with their father far ahead, that Okwi began the tale.

There was a boy whose parents sent him to the warm springs one day. His name was Sunday. While swimming he met two brothers. And they swam, and they laughed.

While they swam, a guide returned from a day safari. Bako (a man described by the warden as not quite middle aged, slightly less than handsome and lacking enough refinement to be considered pleasant) had spent the afternoon leading a foreign couple through the bush. This couple was one of the lucky few who witness both elephants and lions on their visit. And so it was with a smile that Bako sat down at the bar and ordered a beer with the tip he received for his good fortune. The bartender, a man of indeterminate age and few words, listened to the guide tell of a pair of lions he had seen not more than three kilometers from where they sat. The lions had lazily rested in the shade, barely even stirring as Bako drove the Land Rover within fifty meters. The foreign woman had even been so bold as to open her door when the vehicle stopped. The lioness turned her head to them, lazily opening her eyes. But the slothful reaction of the lions was more than made up for when Bako lunged across the woman and slammed shut the door. Not yet ready to relinquish his tale, Bako berated the stupidity of the woman while drinking the fruits of her generosity.

Okwi slowed his steps and allowed his younger brother to get ahead. When Yomi turned, Okwi lowered his head and stared through his eyebrows. This is where Papa cannot hear, he said. And though the baboons above continued their chorus, Okwi's voice lowered.

While Bako drank, Sunday and the two brothers played in the water until the sun, though not its light, could not be seen. With the sky darkening, the baboons above began to raise their voices against the coming night. Ignoring the increasing, and incessant racket, Sunday got out of the water. He had been instructed to return to his family's rondel as soon as it started getting dark. He had never been to Yankari before, and even though the path was easy to follow, his parents worried for his safety. The brothers had visited once before. They were familiar with many of the shortcuts (though they often took longer to reach their destination) and took advantage of them often. And so it was that the brothers remained in the water while their new friend got out.

It was not long, however, until the brothers also ended their play. First one, then a second baboon had decided that the lack of a third human meant the chance of a successful foray into mischief was greater. The brothers realized they also would need to get out if they hoped to still have towels, shirts and shoes for their walk home.

And so the brothers walked up the hill, past trees lining the path, underneath the watchful, if not mischievous, gaze of hundreds of eyes. But as they walked the brothers did not notice that the baboons were growing quieter. And when they reached the top of the hill and looked up they recognized the silence and their eyes opened wide.

Okwi touched his brother's shoulder. Are you scared yet? he asked. Yomi looked up with all the bravado his six years could muster and said he wasn't scared. Okwi dropped his voice still lower and went on.

The bartender was not enjoying himself. Having finished over half a gallon of beer already the once mildly annoying aspects of the guide's personality were quickly being magnified. It was during one of the rare pauses in Bako's self-centered monologue that the bartender noticed the click of the ceiling fan and the hum of the fluorescent lights. And it was the recognition of those familiar sounds, without their constant companion the baboons, that prompted the bartender to look outside.

Sunday was standing in the clearing, around which lie the restaurant, the cracked tennis courts and the bar. Walking lazily across the far end of the courtyard was a lioness. Sunday, not more than twenty meters from the door to the bar, was standing motionless. His eyes followed the lioness as it meandered in the distance. Sniffing the air, the lioness turned away from the courtyard (and the boy) and looked down the road leading into the park. The bartender, watching all this, walked quickly to the phone. He picked it up and called the warden. As the bartender spoke, Bako overheard the quick words and looked out the window. He saw the lioness in the distance and noticed the same lighter colored patch of hair on her right flank that he had noticed earlier in the day. Without turning around he shouted for the bartender to "Come look at this. One of my lions is out there." The lioness turned her head at the noise and paused.

Behind Sunday, the brothers stood frozen in the darkening shadows that guarded the path. They had seen the lioness look down the road, away from them, away from Sunday. The brothers, mindful now of the silence, crept quietly into the foliage that bordered the path. The older brother whispered. *Run. Run to the bar.* He was either not heard or ignored. In truth, Sunday was unable to move. He was rooted to that spot and, try as he might, he was unable to take the first step toward either the trees or the bar.

When the lioness turned her head, the bartender's voice stopped. On the other end of the line, the warden understood the silence and replaced the phone, picked up his gun and walked out the door. Bako realized quickly the folly of his act and shrunk into the shadows, away from the window and the fear that permeated his body.

The lioness, having heard the shout, began to wander in that direction. Though she was still over one hundred meters away, the brothers began to feel the small bit of excitement they once felt begin to disappear in the face of their growing fear.

As the lioness slowly walked, the older of the brothers tried desperately to will his new friend into action. *Before it's too late*, he whispered. *Run, please, run.* But it was wise for Sunday to remain still. With short legs he would be no match for a hungry lioness. He stood. And he waited. He did not move. Looking closely, you would not have likely seen him breathe. And those who watched were

silent as well. In that moment, with the eyes of a boy, his friends, a bartender and hundreds of baboons fixed on one lion, the silence encompassed them all.

And so it was, after minutes that seemed like hours, and after the lioness had wandered within thirty meters of the boy, that the younger of the brothers could not bear the scene any longer. An emotion, from a place unknown before this moment, began to rise within him. It moved through his stomach, into his lungs and up his throat. And when the younger brother's lips parted it escaped. Through his grasping hands a small cry filtered out, piercing the quietness. Sunday, who now stood directly between the brothers and the lioness, heard the sound and watched as she turned her head and looked directly at him. Fear rose within him and he lost control of his bladder. And as his shorts darkened, he found the ability to move that had escaped him for so long. With his first step a change came over the lioness. No longer was she the disinterested observer. Now she saw her prey and prepared to pounce.

Yomi's steps quickened. His brother stopped. Okwi had thought long about this story, how and when to tell it. This was a moment he had seen and he relished it. If you want to hear the rest we can't get too close to Papa, he said. The knot in Yomi's brow deepened as they slowed to barely a shuffle. Okwi took advantage of the quietness to bring his voice down to a whisper.

From his first movement, Sunday was sprinting. He took one stride and was now nineteen meters from the bar's door. He took another and was eighteen meters away. Another step and then a fourth brought him closer still. The lioness stirred, the muscles in her legs taut. And at that moment the bartender prayed. And his prayer must have been answered, because the boy took four more strides and the lioness remained. With eyes fixed on his every move, the lioness stood her ground, watching as her prey was now only twelve meters from the door. The lioness had not moved when Sunday reached the halfway point. And though her muscles tensed, she stood her ground when Sunday was eight meters and then six meters from safety. But when his dash had taken him within four meters of the door the lioness began. While Sunday strode once the lioness covered four times the distance. Still, when he was only two meters from the door the lioness was still over thirty meters away. When he reached the door the lioness still had twenty meters to go. And when he turned the handle, the door held firm. He tried again. Again, the handle turned but the door held fast. The lioness seemed to pause in her chase, her head tilting to the side almost in amusement. Sunday turned and, in an instant, he saw her eyes grow large then narrow just before she leapt. In the split second between her feet hitting the ground and the final push, the world paused. And in that pause, the brothers saw her tightened muscles. And in that pause, the bartender saw her eyes ignite. And in that pause, Sunday felt the lion's heat.

But like all pauses, the scene resumed. As the lioness left the ground, her roar filled the air. Like a gunshot, the lioness released a shout to shame every

baboon. And with a heaviness the lioness landed upon the boy. In hysterics, Sunday crumpled to the ground underneath her weight. Blood spilled out, staining the steps on which he and the lion lay. He screamed in horror as the lion's body lay on top of him.

Their eyes closed to the horror, Sunday, the bartender and the brothers did not see the warden lower his gun from across the courtyard and begin to run.

Okwi looked down at his brother. Yomi's eyes were barely slits and his fists were clenched as he tried to hold back his anger and his tears. He ended up ok? Yomi asked, angry at having cared so much. He began to run, to reach his father but Okwi caught his arm. Don't go yet, there's more. And though he could have whispered still, Okwi spoke aloud once again.

Sunday still cried out when the warden slid him from underneath the fallen lion. He fought with all he had when the bartender wiped the lion's blood from his arms, his body, his face. When his mother and father arrived he resisted their touch. He would not allow their embrace. He spent the night in a frenzy. For in his mind, the lion lay above him. Its weight pressing against him. Its heat scorching his body. Its blood mixing with his own, spilling onto the ground. And every touch and every sound and every sight took him back to that moment.

This is the story Okwi told his brother. And like his brother, Yomi felt little peace when the story ended. Okwi, being the older of the two, felt an obligation to bravery, though even he was shaken by the tale. And though the story ended somewhat well, neither boy was content.

Far behind their father now, the boys reached the top of the hill. The bar was on their left as they exited the trees. Lost in their thoughts, encompassed by their fears, with the sun setting quickly, the boys walked on, unaware of the stillness in the air.

DECEMBER DREAMS

Paul Rondema

December dreams:

Snow upon the branches;
Shoveled walks;
Three bedroom houses.

A two car garage
and a job in the city.
A hearing next week;
in the meantime no presents to buy.

And a son you don't know
who's growing without you;
ex-wife who really can't care.

A mailbox of millions you've already won;
Thousands you've already lost.

A hearty man's dinner,
and a hearty man's drink,
and falling to sleep with the TV still on.

Whatever happened when December would dream
of a year so full of promise?

Wherever went the smile you wore
when at midnight the clock would chime?

Whenever left the twinkling eye,
the sparkling smile
the hop in step
and love for life?

Whatever happened when December would dream
of a year so full of promise?

Whatever happened to December dreams?

FISHING WITH JAKE

Greg Harris

That summer everything changed.
The police took you from your Dad.
Your adolescent sister left you behind in childhood.
I gave you a couple good mornings fishing Takhlakh Lake.

Our canoe bit across the black morning waters
as Klickitat warmed to a rose reflection in the sunrise.
An osprey soared above us, biding its time
Til its need was caught in a shaft of perfect light.

A juvenile rainbow caught my line,
Swallowing the lure deep into its gills.
I took too long and tore out the hook.
The little beauty lay glassy-eyed in my frantic hand.
I plunged him over the side into cool, clear waters
where others had redeemed us by flipping free,
but this one turned belly-up and still.

"This isn't a good sign," I said
You agreed and went on fishing.
I didn't let go, and he turned upright,
Gills heaving, heart pounding in my hand,
A tendril of ripped flesh floated from the side of his mouth.
I held him in six inches of water off the stern of our canoe.
He breathed, I prayed.
You fished for something you never caught.

"Papa, are you going to let him go?"

"I can't, it would be a waste of his life."

Fifteen minutes I held the young rainbow in my
hand.

"Jake, I can't do this much longer."

"Is your hand cold Papa?"

"Maybe he should be breakfast for the
osprey."

And with that the rainbow kicked with vigor,
Once, then twice, and swam away.

Can you do that Jake?

DIVERGENCE

Alissa Harris

And Wife...

It's not been much good dwelling
Here beneath another's tenderest hand
How could it matter that I were here waiting
While you motioned forth across new land
And how could we stand before you
While you came to be
All the world before you
Would unremmitingly yearn or need
Your daughter, son, and their mother
The family with which you stayed
When you left us here forsaken
A farewell the only price you paid
But smile near a little while
Extend your kindest plight
And we'll three imagine far off lands
While I alone tuck them in at night

Man....

It's not ever I wanted you three to leave
But my anxious rump and stallion heart
May well only buck and heave
But only grant this freedom
All may be not needed anyway
For now understand and be dear
That I must certainly away
And how could I be reigned to match
And share with brothers a commonplace life
Understand love, child, and wife
I thought not to bring this strife
But smile near a little while
Extend forgiveness as a wife
And tell not the children of far away
But of their own sweet life

PHOTOGRAPHS

Andrea Bollie

Photographs alive in my mind,
A place unshared.
Words - empty - to describe
Lepers, lying on boards with wheels,
Pulling themselves up the disheveled street.

Children sweeping under my feet,
Begging for one rupee coin.
Mothers with baby on hip,
Dip to their mouth and to my hand,
Begging for some rupee coin or a bite to eat.

A woman in labor, a woman cries,
A woman despised;
Another girl child born.
Abandoned by her husband
Because she could not produce a boy.

Children starving in their beds.
Sick girls dying in the corner,
Ravenous and lice infested
Because of their gender.

Streams of urine outline their homes.
I gasp for my breath and numb my face;

10 rupees in my pocket when I left the house.
12 stop lights we traveled, 30 beggars,
Some lepers, some women, some old and some blind.
Grabbing my hands, reaching out.
Only 10 rupee coins in my pocket.

Cries and hollers, streams of urine, infection, amputation,
Hate, love, abandonment, and starvation, all circling my brain,
Looking for a place, an image, an answer, on paper.
Tracing my heart, wetting my eyes, remaining alive.

THE QUESTION OF "WHY?"

SPIRITUAL REACTIONS TO THE TSUNAMI EVENT

Rev. Dr. Herbert Hoefer, Missions Chair, Division of Theology

Why do bad things happen?
Why do they happen to good people?
Do events, good and bad, just happen randomly?
Do all things happen for a purpose?
Is there some meaning behind history, behind my history?
Is there some divine will that orders everything?

We all have faced these questions in our life, and we will face them all through life. We know that pain and suffering are facts to be faced. The illustration I use for myself is that we are all standing on the battlefield of life. Bullets are flying all around us. Inevitably, some bullets will hit each of us. Even so, why should some people get hit devastatingly, and others not?

In January-February, I spent two months in India and Sri Lanka as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Area Director for mission work in those lands. I had served as a missionary in India for 15 years, so I am familiar with the cultures, religions, and one of the languages, Tamil. Just before my wife and I left, the tsunami hit those lands on December 26th. LCMS World Relief quickly contacted me in India and directed me to go to Sri Lanka to head a survey team to determine how we might best help the survivors of this disaster.

We went primarily to the heavily hit region of northeastern Sri Lanka, which is Tamil-speaking. Our partner church in Sri Lanka is a Tamil-speaking church, and they had already made several trips to provide emergency relief to that region. We thought of focusing on this region also because it is under the control of the Tamil Tigers, a terrorist organization that has been leading a rebellion against the Sri Lankan government. For this reason, very few foreign non-government organizations were willing to go to the region to help.

We thought we would have a niche of unmet need by working through our partner church. Indeed, the efforts of our partner church, the Lanka Lutheran Church, have been very well received. It is an outreach of Christian love to Hindus and Muslims, who have invited the LLC to establish "Lutheran Villages" by rehabilitating people in three locations of the region.

Along with the practical work of trying to discern how to help get these people back on their feet economically, we inevitably carried on a ministry of compassion. One of the major needs we found was the need to find meaning in the catastrophic event. Most of the survivors we met were plagued by various forms of "survivor guilt." They had lost loved ones, neighbors, and whole communities, but they had survived: "Why me? I am no better and in many ways worse than those who died. I feel guilty that I have survived while they perished." How does

one help people work through these deep feelings that plague them day and night?

People were also plagued by philosophical questions of meaning: What is the message/meaning of the event? Because I spoke the local language, I was able to converse with the people on this deeply unsettling topic. Buddhists and Hindus responded according to their belief in the eternal law of karma: bad things happen to you because of bad things done. One young Buddhist lady, for example, said: "All the good have been taken away. Only the bad are left. I am left here to suffer. I am one of the bad."

When we were looking to help a Muslim village, I requested to meet the local Imam. We wanted to determine if they would accept help from Christians, since we know some Muslims want help only from fellow Muslims. We had heard that Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian representatives had already helicoptered in to see the situation. The Imam and his mosque elders quickly responded that they would accept help from anyone.

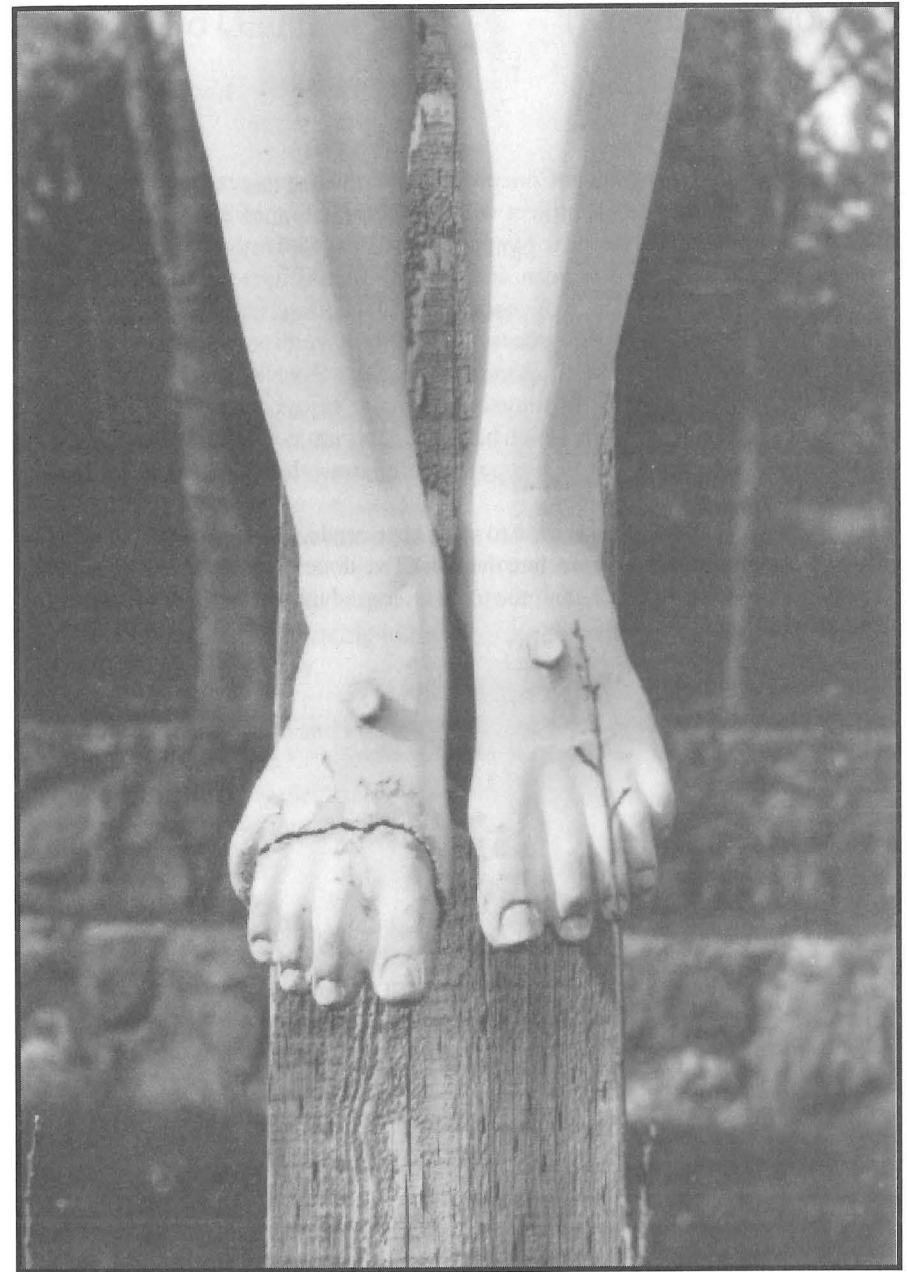
I asked the Imam and his Council members also how they were interpreting this horrendous event to their people. They gave explanations like: "This was all decided beforehand by God so that it had to happen." "It is a warning from God that we should cease our sinful ways and follow His commands." "God was showing that He is in charge." "People who believed in God and died in this event went to heaven, so there was no injustice."

The crisis of faith that occurs in events of such great suffering was reflected in the tearful comment of one Muslim woman: "I can understand if some human being would do such a cruel thing, but I cannot understand when God does it."

If such a disaster would happen to me, what would my crisis of faith be? Since it does happen, shouldn't it be a crisis for my faith in a just, loving God? "Tsunamis" of greater and lesser magnitude are happening all the time. How do I make sense of it? Is it just my need to make sense, but there really is no sense at all?

There are two instances recorded in the New Testament where Jesus was confronted with this question. One is in John 9 where Jesus' disciples ask him why a man would be born blind; whose fault was it? The other is in Luke 13 where Jesus refers to those who blamed people who had experienced personal tragedy saying that they must have somehow deserved this punishment. In neither instance does Jesus provide an answer to the question of "Why?" Rather, He calls His disciples to "do the works of Him Who sent me" and to repent of their own short-sightedness in life.

When I asked Christians in Sri Lanka why this happened, they simply gave two gestures, one lifting their hands up in questioning to God and the other stretching out toward the needs around them. In response to the Muslim woman's lament about the cruelty of God, I could only respond: "God does care for you, and we are here to share that love of God with you."



CEMETERY CRUCIFIX

Sara Bonacum

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

Theresa Todd

I decided to wrap up my time at Concordia with a thesis project in the form of a poetry manuscript. My thesis project will be a compilation of 25 poems dealing with the theme of race and identity. My poems will deal with my experiences being a woman, being an African-American, and with being an African-American woman.

I took on the challenge of composing this manuscript with the hopes of sharing a bit of myself. In the process of writing, I've discovered more about myself than I could ever hope to share with readers. I walked into this project thinking it would be easy to do something I really enjoyed, but in the process realized I am my toughest critic, which has turned this project into a real challenge. But with the most simple words, I hope to share issues that have proven to be a real challenge in my life.

It would be idealistic for me to say I hope readers love all my work. So I will say, I hope readers can appreciate the work I've done. This manuscript is just a beginning for the work I will continue to do after graduating from Concordia and whatever may come next.

DANCING GIRL

Theresa Todd

Captured in the tunes and melodies
Oblivious to the damp fragrance of
100 swaying bodies lost in the same rhythm.
She struts about the dance floor
confident, beautiful and maybe even sexy.

Her black strapless dress tight where it matters
Most. But elegant, classic even.
She makes her way off the dance floor
Aware of the watchful eyes and dropped jaws.

She is gorgeous and she knows it.
Until she sees him.
The stranger she used to know.
She watches him not wanting to,
but unable to look away.

She watches him hold and kiss the girl
in the tight red dress
Bordering on trashy elegance.
He holds her close, and
Whispers in her ear.

She thinks back and can't recall,
Can't remember a time he held her like
That. She is angry because he matters,
Because she still cares, because she is not
the one with him in the tight red dress.

But mostly because now she feels like
nothing more than a little girl in a dress.

FINDING LOVE (BLACK)

Theresa Todd

The attraction comes naturally
As I am easily drawn to the many shades of the earth.
The many shades of brown.
The beautiful mahogany undeniable
The attraction comes naturally.

His beauty is undeniable
It is in his full lips and honey brown skin
I am taken, I am consumed.
And with one look he takes in all of me.
His beauty is undeniable.

The conversation comes easily
As if he knows me before he *knows* me
And with no effort he understands
No explanation is necessary.
The conversation comes easily.

My future lies with this man
His understanding runs deep
He knows me soul and mind.
Familiar with my fears and sorrows,
My future lies with this man.

FINDING LOVE (WHITE)

Theresa Todd

The attraction comes naturally
As I can be easily drawn to the beauty of
A white man on the street.
His fair skin and sandy hair alluring,
The attraction comes naturally.

Yet my mind is resistant
To the idea of this love.
This love with a white man.
The attraction strong as with any man
Yet my mind is resistant.

I think about my children
This white man as their father and
Only half black is their mother
And the faces of my children will hold no trace of me.
I think about my children.

I could easily find love in a white man.
When I abandon my fears and resistance
And if I could just let go
The joys of this man could find me, and
I could easily find love in a white man.

WORD UP SISTA

Theresa Todd

They say don't take offense
To the ignorance you exude.

I'm not to be offended as you
Dumb down your speech,

Your words slurred and
Your vocabulary dulled

You spout off "black girl" phrases.
"Word Up Sista" and "I'm down wit that"

Flow freely in your naïve attempts to relate
To the black face sitting across from you.

I'm not to be offended as I watch you
Conform and convert into the woman you think I am

You snap your fingers and swing your neck,
"Oh girl no he dinnint" you say.

I'm not to be offended as you insult my intelligence
And illustrate your picture of black women.

As I stare at the white face sitting across from me
I can't help but be offended.

MATCH

Tabitha Jensen

Cast of Characters

JULIE, early twenties.

SAM, late twenties/early thirties.

SCENE I

AT RISE:

(A coffee shop. Sam is seated at a bench outside, waiting. Julie approaches, looking expectantly around. Sam eyes Julie; she glances at him, keeps looking around, glances back.)

SAM. Julie?

JULIE. Sam?

SAM. Hi!

JULIE. Hi! *(They shake hands and laugh nervously)* I hope you weren't waiting around too long...

SAM. Nope, just got here.

JULIE. Am I late? I left really early, because I know how iffy the subway is on a Friday afternoon. It's like there's some weird anomaly of people that only work Fridays, because the cars on the road, the people on the bus, the jerks in the street—they multiply by a million on Fridays. I guess they must just be vapor the other six days of the week.

SAM. It's just noon.

JULIE. Great. I'm glad you spotted me, because I can never remember a face. *(Beat)* Well, wanna go inside?

SAM. Sure.

(Sam and Julie enter the coffeeshop and approach the counter.)

JULIE. Hi, I'll have a tall Frappuccino, please.

SAM. Grande double-shot mocha, please.

(Julie opens up her purse tentatively, waiting for Sam to pull out his wallet. They awkwardly fumble around with the money for a moment, until Sam defiantly puts down his credit card.)

JULIE. Thanks.

SAM. You don't look like your picture.

JULIE. What??? (*taken aback*)

SAM. You didn't have glasses. In your picture.

JULIE. Oh. They're new. Is that bad?

SAM. No, glasses are cool. I like glasses.

SAM. (*After a prolonged silence*) Sure is cold for October.

JULIE. I know! I've had my fan going since I got back to campus, since it muffles out most of the stupid stereo and drunken screaming noise, but I'm freezing all the time.

SAM. You don't have heaters?

JULIE. Oh yeah, we do. But I never use it. It makes the room too hot.

SAM. Oh.

JULIE. I hope it can bump up a couple degrees before Halloween. I don't want to have to wear some bulky coat over my costume.

SAM. What's your costume?

JULIE. A French maid.

SAM. Ah.

JULIE. (*Laughs*) So I'll end up dying of frostbite, but at least I'll die looking good! (*Sam is deathly silent*) What are you going as?

SAM. Me? Uhh, I don't do Halloween. It's not really my thing.

JULIE. Really? It's my favorite holiday, next to Christmas. It would rock if you got presents instead of crappy candy, but the way commercialism is going in this country, it probably won't be long until you start hearing commercials like "Get your special someone an iPod, the perfect Halloween gift!"

(*Beat*)

SAM. So you said you're in school?

JULIE. Yeah, I'm majoring in communications. I want to get into publishing someday... or maybe sales... I really have no idea. I think I should get some credit for at least sticking to the same major for two years, though.

SAM. Are you going to USD?

JULIE. No, Yorkshire U.

SAM. Where's that?

JULIE. Across the river? Down kinda by the train station? (*No signs of comprehension from Sam*) Do you know where Adversano's is?

SAM. Nope.

JULIE. Oh. Well, it's a tiny little private school. Nobody's ever heard of it. I called USD to apply for transfer last year, and the admissions lady was all like, "Yorkshire? Is that in-state?" Umm, yeah. It's about five miles down the road.

SAM. Do you have to study a lot?

JULIE. I should, that doesn't mean that I do. Midterms are coming up next week though, so I really need to sit down and actually DO something. And on top

of that I'm stage manager for the play. They're putting on *The Sound of Music*, which was the stupidest idea I've ever heard because they had to outsource half the casting to the elementary school across the street to make up the Von Trapp children, and that leaves me, instead of tracking lights and making sure some two-bit actress diva is happy, babysitting a bunch of brats that like to play hide and seek backstage. (*Beat*) So where do you work?

SAM. AmniStar Communications.

JULIE. Oh, the cell phone company?

SAM. Yeah, but I do computer stuff.

JULIE. (*Laughs*) Oh, so you get a lot of phone calls from computer-retarded people like me who can't figure out why stuff isn't printing or why the email's down?

SAM. No, I'm the IT director so I just deal with server connections on the main frame.

JULIE. Oh. (*Beat*) Well I guess it makes sense that you're doing the online thing, then. It's just weird to me, like shopping on eBay for another person. (*Waits for a response, and gets none*) And I've got some freaky winks before. Like there was this guy who was fifty two who emailed me. FIFTY TWO. Hello! I said I like older guys, not *old* guys. He had a *grandkid*. If we got married, I'd be a stepgrandma at twenty. (*Pauses, no response*) But then I heard from you, and it was like, wow. There are cool, nice people out there you can meet. (*Pauses, no response*) How long have you been doing it?

SAM. About a year.

JULIE. Really?!

SAM. Yup.

JULIE. I just signed up when I got back from summer vacation. I am so sick of frat boys and TAs. I never actually dated anyone from school; that's something I think you should never do. Besides, dating at Yorkshire is more like an engagement. If you're not married within a few months of graduation, you're an anomaly. So as far as Match goes, you're my first date!

SAM. Cool.

JULIE. I was kind of nervous. I mean, not to sound paranoid, but whenever I heard about it before I was like, uh-oh, ax murderers. (*Anticipates a response, gets none*) But I guess it was more reassuring when you said "meet me at the coffee shop on 25th" rather than "Meet me at the abandoned barn at midnight-come alone." (*Again, no response*) I'm glad I did it, though. You seem really... (*slight pause*) cool.

SAM. I've met about a dozen people. Usually it's just one date.

JULIE. Oh... so you haven't met anyone special?

SAM. Nope.

JULIE. You've never just met someone and thought right off the bat, wow. This could be something fantastic.

SAM. No.

JULIE. I'm not talking about love at first sight... I just mean you felt a little spark, saw something unique inside them somewhere.

SAM. Nope.

JULIE. (*In a much less chipper tone of voice*) So basically, everyone you've met online you've just met and forgotten.

SAM. Pretty much.

JULIE. (*Clearly irritated*) Well Sam, I'm afraid I have to run. Thanks for the coffee.

SAM. Are you sure? You just got here.

JULIE. Oh I'm positive.

(*Stands up, gets close to the exit, but then suddenly changes her mind and walks back*)

JULIE. You know, normally I would never do this, but I really have nothing to lose, since I very much doubt you're ever going to call me again, and even if you did I'd have to be high on something to accept. So I'd just like to know what the hell your problem is.

SAM. What?!

JULIE. I've been carrying this shitty conversation on my back since we stepped in here. And believe me, it is not a light load to bear. You started off on the WEATHER, for god's sake. Am I that boring?!

SAM. ...No...

JULIE. And I've tried asking you questions, I've tried telling stories, I've even tried jokes. I know they're bad ones, but you could at least be a gentleman and laugh!

SAM. I'm... sorry...

JULIE. I don't get it! You spend two weeks emailing me about Quentin Tarentino, and your research trip to Ethiopia in grad school, and the New Kids on the Block concert you were forced to take your little sister to and all those prepubescent girls thought you were Joey Macintyre and ripped out a chunk of your hair. And I'm totally pumped to meet you, and I went out and bought these god-damn Nordstrom shoes that I really can't afford and that have given me the worst blisters I've ever had because they go with this outfit I picked out special- and I get here, and you can barely say two words to me the whole time! (*Silence*) So what is your problem? Or my problem? Or the problem with this whole *thing*?!!

SAM. Sorry, but... you just make me feel... *old*.

JULIE. What?

SAM. You're living in a dorm-

JULIE. On-campus apartment!

SAM. Whatever. You're still taking classes, doors are opening left and right, and you're not cemented in some damn dead-end career. It's perfectly socially acceptable for you to go prancing around when it's forty degrees out dressed like an escapee from the Playboy mansion, and I feel dirty for even thinking about it.

JULIE. You're only 33. The *Friends* cast is older than that.

SAM. And you're twenty.

JULIE. Hey! I turn twenty one in two weeks! So if you had this big hangup on my age, why did you email me in the first place?

SAM. I dunno, it sounded good on paper. Or the screen, I guess. I mean, what guy doesn't want to date a hot twenty-something?

JULIE. You.

SAM. I just didn't count on meeting you and feeling like a dirty old man.

JULIE. Dirty old men, horny schoolboys- it's all the same thing.

SAM. I just don't think it's going to work out.

JULIE. Well obviously. (*Begins to leave again*)

SAM. Julie?

JULIE. Huh?

SAM. You *are* funny.

JULIE. Screw you.

(*Julie exits*)

END

SYMBIOTIC SYMPHONY

Lauren Roberts

Face after face
Hands intercourse with hands
Smiles and teeth leaking
Out of lips bursting with warmth
Step to follow step
Shoulders melting to shoulders
Knees bent to fit two
A root in a stone
Bodies opening and closing
Expanding and pulling
Accepting and then pushing
A root in a stone
Splitting and creating
Binding and breaking
Face after face

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Sara Bonacum

Over the last couple of semesters this senior thesis project has been a challenge of a lifetime. The problem was never writer's block, or even narrowing down my subject. I had decided early on to attempt a creative writing project that reflected my highest point of interest in literature: existentialism. The problem rested in the fact that I completely disagreed with the notion of existentialism itself. Coming to terms with being in love with a certain genre of literature, but disagreeing with the overall point of it was difficult. Trying to find a way to manifest my views through a humanistic story was even more arduous.

My thesis changed shape so many times, in so many ways that at times I was unsure if it would ever solidify into exactly what I wanted it to say. Now that my last semester of undergraduate study is coming to a close, my thesis has finally taken shape. It is a series of four short stories that appear to be unconnected, but turn out to be intertwined with each other, as the characters passively and unknowingly have an impact on each other's lives.

These stories, when linked together, serve the purpose of trying to prove that the existential feelings of purposelessness that individuals feel during the course of their lives are in themselves a farce. The truth that I am trying to convey through this project is that purpose in life often hides from our sight, but exists in reality as much as we do. "Robert's Story" is the last story featured in my thesis project.

ROBERT'S STORY

Sara Bonacum

Sitting in his car, Robert watched as the sun burned an invisible hole through the windshield of his car. The parking meter in front of him had a digital screen, and it flashed the word "Empty" at him. He stared at that word and wondered exactly when everything had gone digital. He felt that somehow the world had begun to spin faster than he could walk, and he had been left behind, working his stiff legs hard to catch up. For being nearly eighty, his eyes were still surprisingly clear when the doctor looked at them, and his heart pumped as healthy as an eighteen-year old. With one shaking hand, where skin sagged hopelessly from fingers, and knuckles and palms, he covered his young heart. He raised his other hand and tried to shield his youthful eyes from the images of Lily that kept invading the scene before him. In most of them she was laughing. She would throw her head back and open her mouth. Her uneven teeth would bear themselves to the world, as if they were their own proclamation of imperfect beauty. She had always laughed like that, especially after she cracked those silly jokes that were only funny to her. She had this way of letting everyone know what she was thinking and feeling just by the way she would move her eyes and her lips. She had a way of saying "thank you" that made you want to give her so much more. She had a way of saying "sorry" that made you want to forgive everything that she could ever do. Robert remembered the way that she used to eat ice cream. She was like a child that had never tasted it before. She would throw that head back, threatening her laugh, and moan as if she was tasting it for the first time. "God, this is Heaven," she would say, and the kids would laugh and mimic her. Tilting their heads back, they would groan, "Oh! Oh! Oh my GOD!" and lick their scoop of ice cream. It had irritated him at the time, but she would just laugh with their cruel imitations, tilt forward and touch her forehead to one of them. It must have been their secret joke because they all found it so funny.

He could see her, at that moment, pregnant and fat, huge belly pushing the blankets of the bed upward, the spine of a book cracked and bent in her hand, while her other hand held the core of an apple. "Please, I need more apples," she would beg him. It was snowing then, and apples were out of season, expensive. But he would sigh, and she would watch and smile with her crooked teeth while he piled on scarf and jacket and hat to go get more apples so that she could finish her book.

Most of all, he remembered the way it felt to have her sleep beside him. He would wake in the night and wonder if he was dead. He would look at the window of the bedroom and stare at the curtains, and fall victim to the way she always insisted on having the window cracked to let in fresh air, realizing that it really was nice on these summer evenings. The curtains would billow out, and then suck back in, and Robert remembered wondering if that was God breathing in his own

bedroom. His eyes would burn, the dry climate taunting him to close them again, and he remembered the one time that he remembered the gentle sound of a breath stronger than the one that moved his curtains. Hers. Looking at her in the dark he could see everything. Every feature was accentuated by the shadows that haunted their matrimonial bedroom. Her pillow burned with her hot breath and the warmth of her face, and in this memory, Robert opened his mouth and cried alone in a maroon Pontiac sedan. "Empty" taunted his grief and he reacted. Pushing the car door open, his not-so-young legs stumbled down the bank to the sandy beach. The ocean roared and he sat down to think and fondle the bottle of pills with her name printed so coldly on it in his pocket. A young girl walked by, and all he could think was that she had her whole life before her. She was young and beautiful, just like his wife had been...before the first stroke. She walked on, and Robert thought about the way that Lily hadn't been able to walk after awhile. The ocean, so capable, could run in and out and up and down the sand, but Lily couldn't take herself to the bathroom. The stroke had incapacitated the left side of her body...the hand that she held books with, the one that she used to crack their spines, was curled at her side and useless. He thought of that hand and the way that it laid there, contacted, the fingers curling in toward her palm, and how he had to clip those nails so that they wouldn't cut her while her fingers rebelled. As if her hand held an invisible string connected to the left side of her mouth, Lily smiled sideways then. She would look up at him, and smile, so proud when he read cheesy Hallmark "get well" cards to her from her kids, and signed in crayon from grandkids. The truth is that Robert wondered where they were when she was re-learning to tie her shoes, and pull up her pants after going to the bathroom and brushing her teeth. They had put her in a home.

The second stroke came soon after the first. It robbed her of the other side of her body. Robert couldn't help her anymore. He couldn't lift her from the bed into a chair, or from a chair onto the toilet, from the toilet to the bathtub, from the bathtub to a chair. But he was there at meal times. He would spoon mashed-up peas and blended steak into her sagging mouth, and a few times he looked into her eyes while they welled up with tears. She couldn't talk but in her way they told him of her grief.

The third stroke hit and the doctor put in a feeding tube. He cut a hole in the very place on her belly that Robert had kissed so many times, and a tube stuck out where it was red and sore to feed her. He remembered the way that he had leaned forward toward her belly this last time. His lips were old and chapped, and her belly was wrinkled and sore, and he had kissed the place where the tube was coming from. The nurses had put a special chair beside her bed for him to sit in and he cracked spines, ate apples, and read her books, even though her eyes were clouded, unresponsive and sad. He went every day to her side, and then today she was gone. He was careful to take an old bottle of Oxycontin from the cabinet that had been hers, for pain, and bring it in his pocket to this beach.

He forced his eighty-year old limbs to walk, and he continued down the beach with the bottle in his hand. Stopping for a moment, he looked at her name

and gripped it tighter. He was going to take the whole damn thing, and find her, wherever she was, in that place where her hands weren't curled in and her smile was flawed, beautiful and wide again. She was going to uncurl those fists and reach out to him, and wrap those arms around him, and whisper in his ear, "I need more apples."

As he contemplated unscrewing the childproof lid, a glimmer in the surf caught his eye. Forcing his stiff legs forward, he worked his way into the edge of the wet foam and bent to find a penny rolling with the heartbeat of the water. He lifted it from its watery grave in his wrinkled hands. It sat in the late sun among a palm of sand and shone, cleansed by salt.

Robert remembered then the first time he was on this beach fifty-five years previous, and it was with her. He had kept an old and corroded penny in his pocket for as long as he could remember then, and was convinced that it was lucky after years of victorious baseball games and passed tests. He remembered Lily's hair, long and dark, embraced by the wind and reaching back to it in an erotic dance, while the sun had leant down with its bright ribbons to crown her his queen. He was poor then and had reached into his pocket and fingered his lucky penny on this evening when he needed luck the most. He had uncurled her delicate hand and placed that penny in her palm, saying, "I'm not rich now, but someday I will be, and I will give you everything that you deserve if you will be my wife. I will make you the most wealthy woman in the world and work to make all of your dreams come true." Lily had thrown her head back in her way and laughed. Its sound bounced off the sun and hit the water, only to make its way back to his forever-young heart. "I don't need money; I just want you to feed me apple sauce and read me books when I'm old and can't do it myself."

Robert dropped the bottle, pocketed the penny, determined to give it to his grandson, and walked back to his car. The "empty" sign wasn't flashing on the parking meter anymore. Someone had bought him some time.

ambiguous

Kristine Anderson

—please understand—

pressing through the muck of my foul life
muscles stacking my back up
are straining for the oxygen
that was one time given without reserve.

my toes digging, so fiercely,
to the common ground beneath
the mortal which pends on
their breath – their dance.

am I nothing that I am incapable
to advance my hunched over position...
but just enough that I am not impelled
by this impenetrable substance
back to before my awakening, before my present?

this present opening has caused me to implore, petition
why am I pressing?
can I not walk through and prostrate
to the gods on the other side?

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

Chris Thomas

The submitted piece is the first half of the twelfth chapter in a book Chris is currently writing for his thesis project. The book is entitled "Resigning the Chain" and is the last in a trilogy about the journey of Benjamin Devros, a marine who went AWOL from Afghanistan early into the 2002 conflict. The underlining theme in the three books is religion. Each book addresses this topic differently; the first from an Asian/middle eastern perspective, the second from a European perspective and the third from an American perspective. Chris submitted to us this section of chapter 12 because he saw it as one of the many thrilling portions of his book and he wanted readers to understand that though religious philosophy plays a major role in this novel, it isn't the only thing the book offers readers.

RESIGNING THE CHAIN: BOOK 3, CHAPTER 12 "PURSUIT"

Chris Thomas

The branches were becoming harder to see as the light escaped from every corner of his vision. What had originally been a clear trail was now a congregation of shadows and Devros was certain he'd left the original path eons ago.

"God damn it," he whispered as he pushed his legs as hard as they would let him. He stole a moment to look down at his watch and wished he hadn't. After nothing but running for half an hour he was close approaching his record time for a straight sprint without stopping. His head and face were soaked in sweat and his muscles ached in places he never knew they could. He tried to make himself think of a time since basic that he'd ever pushed himself this hard, but couldn't remember a single moment outside of Ramstein. He wanted nothing more than to throw himself to the ground and let the earth cradle his wounds. It's at times like these that you begin to give yourself excuses to take a break. "Why is it I'm not stopping?" he said to himself.

A loud whizzing sound engulfed his left eardrum. He felt the pain shoot through his body. His hand instinctively came forward to coddle the fresh wound at the side of his head. The bullet had only grazed him but it felt far worse. He didn't break his stride but instead turned to get a quick estimate of how many were already close enough to hear him. "One...three...seven, shit!" he said to himself.

The branches continued to become an obstacle for him and his stride was obviously being affected by it. Every other step, it seemed, he'd have to wrestle with a patch of forest that seemed to suddenly sprout in front of him and had no intention of parting the way for neither he nor anyone else.

"I've got to stop, I've got find somewhere..." he thought. His eyes scanned the woods but meet only what had become an all too familiar sight of blackness. "CRAP! COME ON! It wasn't *that* far away from the road!" he yelled.

A loud blast broke from behind him. Another rushing bullet flew past, this one hitting a tree just ahead of him, shattering bark across his oncoming path. "You idiot, be quiet," he told himself.

Devros could feel his pursuers gaining, their footsteps were less than a league behind his now and they were clearly in range to hear him speak. He knew it wasn't long before the Blackhawks were overhead with their searchlights. "Then maybe I'd have some light," he thought. It was then that Devros spied a shunt of moonlight forty-five degrees to his right. "Finally, there it is," he said. It was the field he had been running towards since escaping from their car.

With what little strength he had left, he changed his heading to match the opening and pushed himself into a full run, straight towards it. His pursuers noticed the shift change and he could hear the senior officer issue orders to pursue in the new direction. By now Devros' clothes were soaked to the point

where he looked as if he had just taken a swim in them. The small pack on his back wasn't helping either, it built up heat and kept causing drops of sweat to pour down his back side and collect in his pants. With all the commotion, he never realized that his clothes could weigh him down. When he made the course correction he closed some of the gap between him and his pursuers. It was only now that he conceded he may not make it out of the field and into the river, his primary goal.

"Where is he?!"

"Just there!"

"If you have a shot, take it!"

Devros began to put voices with a face as several soldiers came within his peripheral vision. Everything but hope melted away and the single goal of at least getting to the field filled his every atom. He pushed himself into a full-on sprint and kept his arms busy smashing through any natural resistance from the forest. The seconds passed and the clearing drew closer as did the soldiers. He could see the field now, just in front of him. It was almost a mile wide and twice that in length, filled with tall grass and sitting in the middle of it, an old barn that he remembered from high school. His mind drifted, for a second, to those days now long past him. He briefly recalled his brother's made-up games they played out there. A smile began to grow on his face but was wiped away just as quickly as it had come by a swift blow from his right.

He was on the ground. Allowing the memory to cloud his mind, Devros hadn't noticed the closest soldier fling himself directly upon him. The soldier's tackle had vaulted both of them several feet. The two men rolled on the ground until a rock ceased their momentum. Devros recovered quickly as it was the soldier that took in a majority of the blow. Devros snatched the opportunity; he balled his hand into a tight fist and slammed it into his attacker. The soldier went immediately limp and fell into unconsciousness. Devros took in what felt like his first, full breath in years; his adrenaline was pumping solidly throughout his system and he realized he didn't have time to rest. One quick glance told him he had rolled past some brush, which had, at the moment, obscured his presence from the other soldiers who were as close as his attacker had been.

Devros grabbed the soldier's side-arm, a bullet casing and his med pack. He stuffed them into his backpack and than dog-crawled past the brush and into the field, which was a meter away from his current position. He looked up as he entered the tall grass and counted twelve soldiers running into the clearing and several more checking along the wood perimeter.

"We got him!"

"Where?!"

"Cedra had him! I saw him take him down!"

"So where the hell are they?"

Devros ducked down and continued to dog-crawl around the soldiers, looking up from time to time to be sure his path was sufficiently leading away from them. He was surprised how muddy the ground was, still soaked from the downpour a few nights ago. The mud made his journey difficult as he had to continuously pull

his knees and elbows from its grip. Another obstacle was the grass; it was wet and stuck to his clothes as he tried to silently but quickly crawl through it. He imagined that if weren't for the limited moonlight, he would have been spotted immediately by the search party. Still he kept his ears peeled for frantic shouts or whistles which would convey their discovery of him. The field also held other unpleasanties; it was teeming with a wide variety of insects and arachnids that had made it a comfortable home there, away from humanity.

Just as with the branches in the forest, now Devros was pushing aside grass shoots and spider webs, taking in all manner of swift cuts, occasional bits and mud finding its way onto every portion of his body. He continued to crawl like this several minutes before spotting the river. The good news was it appeared to be only three quarters of a mile from his position. The bad news was the original search party had determined that he was definitely in the field somewhere and now there appeared to be twenty or so soldiers scouring the field in a standard search pattern.

Devros figured he hadn't any choice but to keep crawling and hope he made it at least as far as the barn before they found where he had originally cut a trail. "Just get behind the barn and run, they won't notice. Just get behind the barn," he repeated to himself. The words felt good; they gave him reassurance and he honestly felt like he could make it.

"Look! THERE!"

"SIR! We have trail leading north towards the center!"

These statements were followed by a series of short burst whistles and a lot of movement. Devros came to a full halt. He made his body motionless and perked his ears. Ready himself onto his knees and the points of his feet, he prepared himself to run. There would be no more words unless they tagged him so he was listening for either movement in his direction or the sound of guns cocking.

Training his ears south, he heard footsteps closing in. They were light but quick and he allowed himself a minute before they had a clean shot. He still wasn't close enough to the river to make a clean run for it but there was the barn. He had shifted his direction towards it and it was only a few meters away now. He slicked his hair back and chanced a look towards it; the wall he faced was on the east side of the barn. The structure itself was a larger version of an Australian style complex. It was about 10 meters high and 12 meters long. The barn had three levels to it; the first used to be a massive collection center that had stalls lining the walls and open space in the middle. Above that was a secondary collection center and Devros remembered it holding offices and tool closets. The third level was a small attic and storage area. The east wall had a few places along it where boards had rotted away and created doorways into the first level of the building.

The footsteps became louder and Devros could hear the sound of guns being readied. He knew it had to be now. Taking the gun from his pack, he aimed the barrel toward a nearby private, the one close enough to get a good shot. Taking the safety off he steadied his arm, which was shaking now from muscle exhaustion. "One shot, all I get is one shot and then aiming won't be part of the

equation...damn," he thought. Devros crouched himself down and got onto his feet. His hand was losing its focus as the soldiers drew so close he could hear their breathing. He pulled back the trigger, fired the weapon and sprang from the field in a mad dash for the closest opening against the barn wall.

"AHH! SHIT! HE HIT MY LEG!"

"Open fire!"

The soldiers answered Devros' one shot with a thousand replies. Not bothering to figure out where they were aimed he continued to run straight for the opening. One meter, two, three, four; as he neared the exposure, he felt his legs begin to give out. The blood had been poorly circulating through them since he began for the barn and now they were finally giving up on him after all this time. Fighting spasms and searing pain Devros kept running, not noticing the flicks of blood dropping onto what was left of his shirt and pants. The bullets flew so rapidly, one even went just past his eyes. It looked like a blaze of light, almost like a small asteroid or bug zipping by on its way to somewhere else. The opening came up on him, one meter away now. Devros hurled himself into it and balled up into a gymnastic tumble as he rolled through a stall and then through its worn down wooden fence, directly into the middle of barn's first level corridor.

"He's inside."

"Hold your fire!" yelled Langdon. The soldiers immediately ceased their weapons fire and stood from their crouched positions. The ones that weren't completely exhausted stood at parade rest and awaited their orders. Langdon paused for a moment and then signaled for Frahm to come closer.

"Yes, sir?" Frahm asked in a stance of complete attention, hand in a perfect salute. He had been chasing down Devros on foot and longer than any of the rest of them, yet he stood completely stone still awaiting orders from the man he still acknowledged as his superior. "I'll put him in for Major if they don't break me for this." Langdon thought.

"Have the men surround the structure and keep close watch over any cracks in the wall. I want a double contingent at the rear; I don't want him going for the river. Once the men have created a perimeter, I want you to give your whistle a single blow, clear?"

"Yes, sir," Frahm gave a salute and waited ten seconds before Langdon returned it. With the orders confirmed he set out making Langdon's orders come into reality. Before he could get too far, however, Langdon stopped him.

"Captain," Frahm turned to face the Colonel and re-positioned himself back into a full attention posture. "Did you see if we actually hit him?" Frahm's answer was immediate, almost regretful in tone and was followed up with a another steady salute.

"I think just his arm sir." Langdon didn't respond; he knew it wouldn't help matters. Instead he met Frahm's salute and watched as the young officer jogged away to carry his orders out.

"I need some sleep." Langdon thought as he nested his forehead into his hands. The simple act of rubbing his temples with his thumb and middle finger gave him far more relief than he'd expected. It allowed his thoughts to flow freely but that never really mattered since the pregnancy. He so rarely thought about anything other than his new son these days. In fact, today had been the first time in ten months he had completely focused on anything without his Daniel's face suddenly becoming a distraction. Now, with the pursuit of this latest problem nearly over, the thought of returning home almost overwhelmed his brain pathways.

"Sir?" The voice startled Langdon back into life. He glanced up to see a middle aged man at full attention and giving the most rigid salute he'd seen in a week. He was carrying the rank of master sergeant on his lapels, which were still in pristine condition. He also noticed that the sergeant wasn't from his regiment; his insignia identified him as Sorealis from the 112th Calvary Division.

"I trust the humvees made though the woods without too many scratches Sergeant?"

"Sir, yes, sir!"

"Good, I want two positioned at the north side and the others at the south side of the structure, head beams on full, understood?"

"Sir, yes, sir!" The sergeant gave a quick salute but didn't wait for it to be returned. Instead he turned a complete 180 and headed swiftly for the five humvees that had just barreled through the forest. Langdon would almost have let the crude tact take the better of him when the sound of a sharp whistle filled the air.

BAUBLE (OR "O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL")

Anne Woodward

Come all ye crayons
Come mock a red apple
Hanging alongside cones, ions, parsimones:
One constant trollop trommel
 rings the tree
 however and ever green of sleeves

And you strapping young lads must tiptoe unto death;
 must itty into hee-hawk monsters
Come not to perch
Come to bring no docile green twig
Come to couch not coup:
Come to hang.

MY DISEASE

Matthew Nash

Diabetes mel/li/tus A severe, chronic form of diabetes caused by insufficient production of insulin. It typically appears in childhood or adolescence, is characterized by increased sugar levels in the blood and urine, excessive thirst, and frequent urination. Also called **insulin-dependent diabetes, type 1 diabetes**.

You selfish prick
Take another stab
At life you vile
Pig
You crave carbs,
Fat, sugar, and life
Woe is you
Boo Hoo
The more you sulk
The less you live

You are up
Then down
No control over
Smiles or even frowns
This is your crutch
So keep praying
Your cure will come
Death is knocking

NIGHT WATCH

Aaron Snyder

There is a worn face
Leaning, weary on a pike

Two eyes looking over
A black sleeve
Seeing and unseen

Shields, swords and spears
All polished
Beyond their use

Hollow hands and vacant guns
Once fierce
Now posture, pose

The dull look of prosperity
The glaze of rich food
Comfort leads to wicked comfort

CONTRIBUTORS

Kristine Anderson, Sophomore, International Business, writes, "I wrote "ambiguous" in the midst of all the trials and growing that I continually face concerning my spirituality, God, questions about humanity, and the other thoughts that arise in conversations with great friends and professors."

Michael R. Ashley, Junior, Social Work, writes: "I am originally from Eagle Butte, South Dakota which is the capital of the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation of which I am a member. My mission is to get my master's in social work and return home to work as an alcohol and drug counselor and help those with addictions. I hope to one day be a clinical director and concentrate on working with the 'impossible' clients others have given up on."

Sara Bonacum, graduating Senior, English and Biology, writes "I have had a great time this past year as a student editor for *The Promethean*, and value the experience that it has given me. I am looking forward to a graduate program in literature and plan on eventually earning a PhD in literature."

Andrea Bollie, Senior, Secondary Education - Language Arts, writes, "The inspiration for this piece came from my experience living in India as a midwife. I collected these moments while working in the government maternity hospitals and while providing primary health care in the slums. When I came home and began to adjust, these were some of the images I could not lay to rest."

Luis Garcia, Junior, English, is also vice-president of the English Honor Society Club, Sigma Tau Delta. He writes, "The poem "Americano" was written on September 11, to express the inner feeling and concern I feel as a Hispanic-American on the issue of being an "American." I was inspired to write "Con Los Ojos Cerrados" (With Our Eyes Shut) by two different sources. The first was one of my favorite poems, the poem by Octavio Paz by the same title. I was also inspired by the what I have been learning about how humans have dealt, deal and will deal with difference in our past, present and future societies."

Alissa Harris, graduating Senior, Psychology, has written for the *Herald and Newspaper*.

Greg Harris is the Marketing Director at Concordia University and may be among the youngest grandfathers in all of humankind. The events described in "Fishing with Jake" actually happened just as the poem reports, and Greg hopes to renew his friendship with that rainbow trout on a fishing trip this summer.

Rev. Dr. Herbert Hofer served as a missionary in India for 15 years and as a parish pastor in Wisconsin for 13 years. He has been a member of the faculty at Concordia since 1997. As the Missions Chair at Concordia, Rev. Hofer also serves part-time for the LCMS Northwest Dt. and for LCMS World Mission. His writings have been primarily in the areas of the relationship between Christian faith and Indian

culture. His best-known book is research among Hindus who are worshippers of Jesus, entitled *Churchless Christianity*. For further information: <http://faculty.cu-portland.edu/herbhoefler/>

Tabitha Jensen, Sophomore, English and Marketing. "Match" is a composite of several of her more disastrous misadventures in the abysmal labyrinth that is the Portland dating scene. For the record, she does not particularly enjoy long walks on the beach or foreign films.

Matthew Nash, Junior, Secondary Education - Language Arts, writes, "I am active in amateur film making, comic book reading, and ASCU. I also hate sugar free food/drinks because they give people gas. I have been type 1 diabetic since I was 18, and I have a good grasp on it now. Diabetes made me evaluate my lifestyle and make more conscious decisions about what I do in my life."

Lauren Roberts, Sophomore, Humanities, is active in the Humanities Club and the English Honor Society. She writes, "I would like to thank Braz Cuba for his superb wit and affirmation of mediocrity."

Paul Rondema completed his undergraduate degree in 1999 at Concordia and returned to work on his Masters in Education. He teaches at Reynolds Middle School in addition to writing stories, articles and music. The story "Yankari" is based on observations, stories and rumors from Paul's years of living in Nigeria.

Lukas Sherman writes, "I am enrolled in the part-time MAT program at Concordia and expect to teach high school English. I have English degrees from Wheaton College and Boston University. I work at an elementary school and live in SE Portland."

Aaron Snyder writes, "I am a 6th year Junior in English with a background in art and engineering. I am a motor sports enthusiast and metal sculptor. "Night Watch" is inspired by the group portrait of the same name by Rembrandt. I tried to illustrate the foolish appearance of a military group congratulating itself."

Chris M. Thomas, Senior, English and Business, has been writing as a hobby for 12 years and has published some of his essays and stories in the University of Alaska *English Journal*, the *Alaska Writer's Journal*, *The Promethean* and the 1999 book *From the Sea to the Stars*. Chris plans to enter either the journalism or marketing professions after college and also to continue writing as long as his body will allow him.

Theresa Todd, graduating Senior, English. Her work has been previously published in *The Promethean*.

Anne Woodward, graduating Senior, cum laude, Elementary Education, intends to apply her degree in missions and in starting small fires. "Bauble" was written for a Christmas Eve celebration at home where each family member presented a poem on the theme of "Eve".



ASSOCIATED STUDENTS of CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

The Promethean is a publication of the College of Theology, Arts, & Sciences
and the Associated Students of Concordia University, Portland, Oregon